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**MAYOR EMANUEL ANNOUNCES CHIBIZHUB WEB PLATFORM
FOR SMALL- AND MEDIUM-SIZED BUSINESSES**

City and WBC Invite More Organizations to Sign Up as Resource Partners

Mayor Rahm Emanuel and World Business Chicago today announced ChiBizHub, an innovative new web platform that connects expert service providers to Chicago's fast-growing business community. Set to launch in March, ChiBizHub will be a one-stop, collaborative platform to help new and existing Chicago businesses accelerate their growth.

"Chicago is full of the most innovative and hard-working business owners in the world," said Mayor Emanuel. "This initiative provides another tool for business owners to grow and scale their business."

The first step to developing the ChiBizHub network is to identify the available resources to support Chicago's businesses. The City and WBC are inviting Chicago-based organizations or "resource partners" to sign up to join this platform before its launch in March. ChiBizHub resource partners will collectively provide access to a wide variety of services, including legal counseling, accessing capital, and navigating the licensing and permitting process. Through this web platform, business owners can directly contact resource partners for assistance, and work with ChiBizHub's team to identify the right provider based on need, location, industry, and stage of business.

For its 100+ resource partners already signed up, the ChiBizHub network offers two clear benefits: (1) small- and medium-sized businesses gain a clear, targeted understanding of the services each partner offers, and (2) new opportunities are channeled directly to providers through ChiBizHub as more businesses learn of those services.

"Small- and medium-sized businesses are the economic engines of Chicago's neighborhoods," said Andrea Zopp, president and CEO of World Business Chicago.

“ChiBizHub ensures that these businesses can not only accelerate their own growth, but also that of Chicago’s thriving entrepreneurial community in total.”

To develop the technology behind the ChiBizHub site, the City of Chicago leveraged SourceLink®, a digital platform provider with nationwide experience. To date, SourceLink® has assisted over 100 communities, from Seattle to San Juan, in building an infrastructure that sparks and sustains entrepreneurship.

“Entrepreneurs need different things, some need investors, others need counselors. Some require a different kind of industry expertise based on their region’s expertise and market. But all entrepreneurs need connections to help them build business—and create jobs,” said Rob Williams, director of SourceLink®.

Initial funding for ChiBizHub was received from the Chicago Community Trust, the City of Chicago, and the Office of the Chicago City Treasurer. Accion, CRF USA, and the Chicago Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection were part of the advisory group in the development of ChiBizHub. Peoples Gas is the inaugural sponsor.

To join this rapidly growing entrepreneurial network, not-for-profit service providers can register today at www.chibizhub.com.

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About World Business Chicago

World Business Chicago is a public-private, non-profit partnership that drives inclusive economic growth and job creation, supports business, and promotes Chicago as a leading global city.

About SourceLink®

SourceLink provides research and development to help communities strengthen their entrepreneurial ecosystems. As the nation’s premier resource for powering entrepreneurs, SourceLink helps build vibrant communities and promotes economic growth by stimulating small business success. SourceLink has successfully engaged with more than 100 communities nationwide, and that number continues to grow. Affiliated networks include Baltimore SourceLink, Colmena66 in Puerto Rico, IASourceLink in Iowa, KCSOURCELINK in Kansas City, NetWork Kansas, Dallas B.R.A.I.N., and more. SourceLink founders include the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, University of Missouri–Kansas City and the U.S. Small Business Administration. Find out more at www.joinsourcelink.com.